

CITY OF FRESNO
DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION
City Hall, Second Floor – City Council Chambers

APPROVED - MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 MEETING

DAC Commission Members Present: Michelle Bronson (Vice Chair), Jenelle Pitt, Robert Hand, Joanna Pilibosian (arrived 10:18am), Mary Beth Randall, Carlos Duarte (ex officio)

DAC Commission Members Absent: Dorothy Young

DAC Secretary: Shannon M. Simonelli, ADA Coordinator

Vice Chair Bronson called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Call to Order

Call to Order and self introductions were made.

Approval of the Minutes of May 17, 2011 & August 16, 2011

Secretary Simonelli noted that in the August 16 meeting it was mentioned that the award recipients were Resources for Independence, Central Valley. RICV was a 2010 nominee, however the award recipient was Fresno City College office of Students with disabilities.

The minutes of the May and August minutes were accepted as revised by motion of Member Randall, seconded by Member Pitt.

Member Reports and Comments

Member Hand shared Resources for Independence is holding their annual dinner September 30, 2011 at 6pm. Attendees can register on the website. The speaker is Michael Hingston, who was in one of the the twin towers when they were hit on 9/11; he and his guide dog were able to get down 72 flights of stairs to get out. Bronson shared that she is excited to attend that dinner. Member Randall

commented that she has had the opportunity to work with Hingston a couple of times and she encourages everyone to attend this event.

Member Bronson shared that this week is Deaf Awareness Week, September 19-23. Events are taking place each night of the week. Tonight is the Breast Cancer Awareness Bingo night and she encourages all to attend. Additional information can be found at www.dhhsc.org.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Simonelli shared that there have been several applicants for the vacant seat on the commission. Looking forward to having an additional appointment and a full commission within the next few months.

Simonelli reported that October 6, 2011 during the Fresno City Council meeting the Mayor will be proclaiming October as Disability Awareness Month and in the same meeting the Mayor will be awarding the DAC Achievement Award recipients. Simonelli encourage all to attend. Council Meetings usually start at 8:30am and most of the awards are completed by 9 or 930am.

Unscheduled Communication

Edward La Comb commented on an incident that happened with the Handi Ride complaint system. Complained 4 weeks ago regarding an incident and has not heard anything back regarding whether or not it has been looked at or handled. Also has an issue about the availability of the complaint forms on the busses. La Comb stated that 8 months ago he was at the DAC meeting and mentioned the problem, to which Greg Eisner said that he would look into the issue and rectify it. La Comb indicated that there are still no forms on the busses and does not believe that it can be an economic problem preventing this. Has heard that there is no way to write a complaint other than contacting City Hall and said that FAX transportation is not answering the phone to take complains. Indicated that he believed that FAX and MV are both blaming the other for a lack of action. La Comb requested that the DAC look into it and try to resolve the issue. There are many little things going on with Handi Ride including lifts breaking and not being serviced. Understands that some of it is economic but without hearing back from FAX La Comb feels it confuses for riders.

Joanna Zamora, Community Organizer from Resources for Independence, Central Valley shared about a Disability Advocacy Team which is being formed in Fresno as well as in Visalia and Merced. Fresno team will start this Friday for an introduction meeting. There will be an educational piece, teaching participants how to advocate for themselves on an individual level and an action piece where they will be advocating as a group for the disability community. It will be a consumer driven group so at this time Zamora is not sure how it will look, since goals will be set with the group and the individual consumers.

Vice Chair Bronson encourages the community to get involved with this opportunity to have their voices heard.

Member Simonelli asked the time of the meeting this Friday. Zamora responded that it will be at 4pm – 5pm at the office of Resources for Independence, Central Valley located at 2940 N. Fresno Street in the conference room.

Member Pilibosian arrived, introduced herself as the newest member of DAC. Vice Chair Bronson indicated that she is thrilled to have Pilibosian on the Commission.

Presentation: Peach Avenue Widening Project, Department of Public Works

Steven Son, Public Works Department Capital Project Manager designing the Peach Avenue Project came to present this project to the Commission. Has a layout of what is being proposed, however because of the room setup it may be difficult to lay it out for the commission. Giving a general synopsis.

Peach Ave widening project will be widening from two lanes to four lanes from Belmont to Kings Canyon. Demoing the existing road, installing new road, center median islands with landscaping, and in the areas without existing sidewalks will be installing new sidewalks. Majority of the sidewalks will be 10 foot wide monolith sidewalks. In some sections there is not sufficient right-of-way so in those areas there will be six foot wide sidewalks. In areas where there are existing sidewalks those will be blended in with the project. Throughout the project it was found that there are numerous returns that do not meet current ADA standards so they will be upgraded to include appropriate slopes, lips at the gutter, and inclusion of tactiles at the landing. New tract signals will be installed at Huntington, existing tract signals will be modified to meet requirements. A cross walk beacon will be installed at McKenzie trail as a separate project, however the

infrastructure will be put in with this project. Son opened up for questions or comments from the commission.

Member Randall asked if APS signals will be installed at the signals.

Son responded that at this time he does not think that it is part of the scope of the project, however if it is something that they need to do he can look into it.

Randall responded that it is recommended, as it is current law and that it is cheaper to do it now with this project rather than later.

Son stated that this project is currently approximately \$6 million dollars and a multi year project. Currently they are working to demo homes and working with the utility companies to start undergrounding all of the utilities starting in October or November. During the construction they are going to be mindful to accommodate disability access through that area however at this time they pay not be allowing any pedestrian access through that area because of safety precautions.

Member Hand suggested that may have one commission member sit down with Son to look over the plans to provide suggestions and bring back any thoughts to the commission. Son agreed and provided an 11 by 17 size copy of the plans to Simonelli. He indicated that they are about 95% complete with the design of this project and working toward finalization.

Bronson extended gratitude for the City's compliance with ADA and emphasized the benefit of being proactive.

Action Item: Selection of the DAC 2011 Achievement Award Recipients

Simonelli noted that there were two nominees, one for the individual award and one for the organizational award and read the nomination statements.

Individual Nominee: Bud Breslin, Nominated by: Donna L. Mullins

Nomination Statement: I would like to nominate our Executive Director Bud Breslin for the DAC Achievement Award 2011. Bud has been the Director here at the Valley Center for the Blind for the past 1 ½ years bringing hope for brighter tomorrows. Because of his dedication and determination to keep the center's doors open, he hasn't ever taken a paycheck. We are a non-profit and he wants the services to continue to be available to our community. There aren't many people who would go above and beyond because of their passion to help others. He has been for years and currently still is very active in "Break the Barriers" also, which services the disabled community through programs that support confidence and self- esteem. His motto "Believe" is our key to perseverance when

there are rough times for the staff as well as students who attend our various classes. He's always ready with a smile, a hug and a kind word that lifts your spirits enabling you to "Believe" that you can be a better person. This man is truly an inspiration in character, commitment and compassion to those who have the honor to know him. "Disability" isn't a word used but "Ability" is, in that empowers each person to be their best in every area of their life. I "Believe" that Bud Breslin is the man so deserving of this achievement award for 2011."

Organizational Nominee: Snacks to You, Nominated by: Anna Maria Havens

Nomination statement: Snacks to You provides employment and vocational training to people with disabilities. This allows for community integration and skills development for their employees. Our organization, Resources for Independence, Central Valley (RICV), is a client of Snacks to You and receives regular visits from STY employees supplying pre-ordered breakfast and lunch meals. We here at RICV enjoy the interaction we have with the STY employees. RICV staff encourages them to continue the great work service and attitude they share with our organization. Additional information: Snacks to You works in conjunction with a program called Vocational Plus Services Inc. Vocational Plus Services works with several different companies to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Member Hand noted that he would like to see more nominations for the future because that brings in more people from the community but that both are good nominations. Hand moved to give the individual award to Bud Breslin and the business award to Snacks to You. Motion was seconded by Member Randall and passed without opposition.

Vice Chair Bronson echoed Member Hand's hope that next year the next year DAC will receive more nominations as this is a wonderful opportunity to recognize businesses and individuals that are serving people with disabilities. Bronson noted that they look forward to presenting this award to both entities.

Action Item: Selection of Officers

Vice Chair Bronson noted that the former chair had to resign, so the selection of a new chair was in order. Member Hand nominated Bronson for chair. Motion was seconded by member Pitt. Bronson opened for discussion from the commission. With no discussion the motion passed without opposition.

Bronson called for nominations of a Vice Chair. Member Hand nominated Pitt for Vice Chair. Motion was seconded by member Pilibosian. Bronson Opened for discussion from the commission, additional nominations, and comments from the public. With no discussion the motion passed without opposition.

Bronson extended her congratulations and noted that she looks forward to working with Pitt.

Action Item: Changing of the DAC Meeting Time

Member Bronson noted that this is an opportunity to change the date and time to make it more compatible for the schedules, opening the floor for discussion by commissioners.

Member Simonelli noted that Thursdays are not a good day for the meetings because of City Council meetings, and that personally Monday mornings are not good for her schedule. She also noted that after selecting a meeting date and time it will be necessary to check on the availability of this room or to find an alternative accessible venue.

Member Hand noted that he has missed two appointments because of State Association meetings that he has which tend to be held on Mondays and Tuesdays, but not consistently conflicting with the current DAC meetings. He noted that next month on the 3rd week he will be at a State Association out of town therefore unable to attend the DAC meeting and suggested changing either the date or the week of the meeting.

Member Pitt noted that previously she had thought that there would be a conflict with her teaching schedule however her program coordinator can provide class coverage so the present time is okay.

Member Pilibosian noted that she is flexible, so the current time is okay and changing the week wouldn't be a problem as well.

Member Randall noted that Tuesdays are good and there are no conflicts with the current time but willing to work with everyone's schedule. She noted that the fourth week does not work for her schedule and that the third week of the month is usually the best option for her.

Member Hand mentioned that there will be some he can miss but not all, so if the current meeting works for everyone then we should keep it.

Member Bronson suggested a Wednesday meeting and asked for comments from the commissioners. Member Pitt noted only the second or fourth Wednesday would work, since she has faculty meetings on the first and third Wednesday.

Member Pilibosian agreed that the second and fourth Wednesday would work best for her because she has possible work meetings on the third Wednesday of the month. Member Hand suggested the second Tuesday instead of the third Tuesday of each month. Members Pilibosian, Pitt, Randall and Duarte indicated the second Tuesday of the month would be fine. Member Simonelli reminded the commissioners that the availability of the current meeting room would need to be checked and if it was found to be unavailable an alternative accessible location would be found.

Member Randall moved that depended upon this room's availability that meetings be held on the second Tuesday of the month. Seconded by Member Hand.

Member Bronson opened up the floor for discussion and comments from the public.

Unidentified attendee asked when this would take effect and if notice would be provided to the community.

Member Bronson asked Member Simonelli when we would know about the availability of the room. Simonelli responded that she could check into that immediately after the meeting and then can post that to the website, outside of the council chambers and on the posting boards in front of City Hall. Bronson indicated that this would be effective the month of October.

Unidentified attendee asked if each meeting attendee could get schedules of the meetings. He indicated that he was shocked at the lack of inclusion of the attendees and public in the decisions that are made. He suggested a meeting of the public so that attendees can contribute their opinions. He indicated that there has not been advanced notification in the newspaper however he has not received any notice aside from a schedule that was provided to him by Member Duarte several months ago. He shared that he feels the meetings to be unfair to the public and that it should include votes from attendees. He was dismayed by the number of public attendees being only three.

Bronson responded that she does encourage feedback and community involvement. In the past when meetings were in the evenings there was only maybe one attendee due to transportation issues and therefore the meeting time was changed to a morning schedule. Bronson noted that there are more

attendees when the meetings are in the mornings and encourages those in attendance today to share the meeting times with others, as the DAC does benefit from community feedback. Bronson reiterated that Member Simonelli would be checking on the room availability and once that was confirmed it would be set from that time forward.

The motion passed unanimously.

Simonelli noted that there will be no meeting held in November.

Report: Task Force to assist the Office of Emergency Services

Sean Johnson, Emergency

Mr. Johnson thanked the commissioners for their comments on the Emergency Evacuation plan that was presented previously and indicated that the suggestions will be incorporated.

Mr Johnson explained that the team from Fresno consisting of himself, Member Simonelli, Member Bronson, and member Hand, attend a FEMA conference in Washington DC to hear concerns and best practices from around the nation how to better integrate the entire community into Emergency preparedness and planning. The team was able to meet and confer on the information gained. One of the goals set by the team was to take action. Currently the office of Emergency Services and the community have a good relationship, so the goal is to continue that by taking action to be better prepared. Mr. Johnson asked for a meeting to share the practices that are available and what could be practically implemented in our community, the goal of which would be to develop a check list style document that would be available to refer to during emergency situations. He emphasized that the goal is to make the entire community of Fresno disaster resilient.

Member Pitt asked if there was anything that was learned at the conference that was surprising or is something that we aren't doing and should be implemented.

Mr. Johnson responded that there were so many good practices that it would probably take an entire day to go over everything. He provided one example of a smart phone application called Tips for First Responders where police or firefighters can get quick tips on how to interact with a person with a disability.

Mr. Johnson encouraged all to come to a planning meeting where various options can be discussed.

Member Hand mentioned that there was over 400 people attending from across the United States and 10-12 presentations daily in addition to top people from FEMA making presentations. He noted that there were countless ideas presented so they will need to be sorted.

Vice Chair Bronson stated that the conference was amazing to see that each state and region has different needs and each disability group has separate needs of which we should be aware. Vice Chair Bronson noted that many people may not be prepared because of a belief that our area will not be affected by disaster and stressed the importance of preparedness. Bronson shared about a reusable Braille reader that could be hooked to a computer for blind people to use to read messages. She indicated the need to be mindful of the changing technology so that it can be included in planning. Vice Chair Bronson asked about the number of people on a task force to assist in this effort.

Member Hand noted that a task force could only be two commission members and has to be time limited with a specific task to accomplish. He suggested instead to have a public meeting so that if three or more members could attend. This would need to be announced and accommodations provided.

Secretary Simonelli supported this idea so as to include more of the commission in the planning process and asked if the commission would want to go with a task force or a public meeting.

Member Pitt inquired if the meeting would then be open to the public and allow for both commissioners and members from the community to provide input.

Secretary Simonelli indicated that that would be the case. Member Hand noted that any meeting with three or more members must be open to the public and must have an announcement.

Member Randall noted that she likes the idea of a public meeting and believes it is important to include the community in this process and it helps to simultaneously educate the public on preparedness. Member Duarte supported the idea of a public meeting.

Noting the agreement from the commission, Vice Chair Bronson concluded that a public meeting should be scheduled. Secretary Simonelli asked Mr. Johnson his preference of schedule for the meeting. Mr. Johnson indicated Monday through Thursdays are best and that he would like to schedule this within the next month. Mr. Johnson asked for the team that attended the conference to come up with a list of items from the conference that could be implemented locally before the

meeting is held to streamline the process. Mr Johnson noted that this was the second FEMA conference looking at whole community preparedness representing the entire United States and the team from Fresno was one of only four teams representing California, the other teams being from San Francisco, Orange County and one other area so our area is leading the fight for inclusion. He shared that anything that is done for emergency preparedness that includes the whole community makes his job easier.

Member Bronson asked Mr. Johnson's preference of mornings or afternoons for the meeting; Mr. Johnson responded that he prefers mornings. Vice Chair stated that the meeting will be set up and that information will be disseminated to the community via the website.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:59am.